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7 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
8 WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
9 AT SEATTLE

10 STATE FARM FIRE AND CASUALTY,
11 as subrogee for Catherine Robinson,

12 Plaintiff,

13 v.
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15 HELEN OF TROY, LLC, *et al.*,

16 Defendants.

Case No. C15-1771 RSM

ORDER DENYING MOTION TO
CONTINUE TRIAL DATE

17 This matter comes before the Court on Defendants' Motion to Continue Trial and to
18 Amend Pre-Trial Scheduling Order. Dkt. #56. Defendants request a 30 to 60 day continuance
19 of trial currently set for June 26, 2017, extension of all pretrial deadlines, and a limited
20 reopening of discovery, which closed on February 27, 2017. Dkt. #56 at 1-3. This request is
21 based on the recent substitution of defense counsel and certain prior deficiencies in discovery.
22 *Id.* at 2-3. Defendants argue their counsel "has been afforded less than three weeks to review
23 the case file" and meet pretrial deadlines. *Id.* at 4. Defendants state there are key witnesses
24 who remain to be deposed and argue that a second attempt at mediation might be successful.
25 *Id.* at 4-5. Defendants appear to imply that there has been newly discovered evidence.
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1 Plaintiff argues there is no newly-discovered evidence, that previous depositions have
2 been sufficient, that the discovery cutoff has long since passed, and that Defendants' choice to
3 substitute counsel two months prior to trial does not create good cause for a continuance. Dkt.
4 #61. Plaintiff points to the local rule stating "[m]ere failure to complete discovery within the
5 time allowed does not constitute good cause for an extension or continuance." LCR 16(b)(4).
6 Plaintiff argues that continuing trial this close to the trial date is prejudicial to Plaintiff and
7 witnesses. Dkt. #61 at 5.

9 On Reply, Defendants argue that their request "is based upon a real need to resolve
10 outstanding discovery issues... and to ensure that this matter is litigated and disposed of, on the
11 merits." Dkt. #63 at 1-2. Defendants' substitution of counsel was apparently not for the
12 purpose of delay but resulted "from the breakdown of the attorney-client relationship." *Id.* at 2.
13 Defendants argue there might be additional documents that remain to be discovered. *Id.*
14 Defendants reiterate that they seek mediation. *Id.* at 4-5. Defendants argue that they may be
15 unable to competently meet upcoming deadlines. *Id.* at 5.

17 The decision to modify a scheduling order is within the broad discretion of the district
18 court. *Johnson v. Mammoth Recreations, Inc.*, 975 F.2d 604, 607 (9th Cir. 1992). For good
19 cause shown, the Court may grant a request to modify or enlarge the deadlines in a Case
20 Scheduling Order. Fed. R. Civ. P. 16(b)(4).

22 The Court agrees that Defendants have not shown the discovery of new evidence, that
23 the discovery cutoff has long since passed, and that Defendants' choice to substitute counsel
24 this late in the game does not create good cause. Defendants' request to continue trial and
25 reopen discovery based on their own counsel's mistakes in litigation ignores the obvious
26 prejudice to Plaintiffs. Defendants' failure to complete discovery within the time allowed does
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1 not constitute good cause. LCR 16(b)(4). The Court finds that, setting aside Defendants'
2 discovery-related arguments, enough time remains for Defendants to prepare for trial or pursue
3 settlement. For all these reasons, Defendants have failed to show good cause.

4 Having reviewed the relevant briefing, the declarations and exhibits attached thereto,
5 and the remainder of the record, the Court hereby finds and ORDERS that Defendants' Motion
6 to Continue Trial and to Amend Pre-Trial Scheduling Order (Dkt. #56) is DENIED.
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9 DATED this 19th day of May 2017.

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12 RICARDO S. MARTINEZ
13 CHIEF UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE
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